

Addendum District Developed Plans: Early Childhood Special Education Content Requirements

Overview The content requirements of the District Developed Service Delivery Plans (February 2009) will be met through a set of five questions and a series of assurances. As a part of the District Developed Service Delivery Plans, districts must describe how Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) instructional services are provided to meet the needs of eligible individuals.

This Addendum provides information for Question #2 and Question #3 addressing ECSE in the District Developed Service Delivery Plan.

Addressing Question #2 Question #2 addresses how districts include the full continuum of services and placements for eligible individuals, including preschool.

The question asks: *How will services be organized and provided to eligible individuals?*

When describing services for preschool children, the district must adhere to federal data reporting definitions of settings for preschool.

Definitions The definitions for “general education” and “special class”, as used in school age, do not accurately define the classroom or service required for preschool children.

In the District Developed Service Delivery Plan, the district must adhere to the following terms and definitions to describe instructional services and placements for preschool children:

- Regular Early Childhood Program – Less than 50 percent children with disabilities; and
- Early Childhood Special Education Program – More than 50 percent children with disabilities.

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Examples for Continuum of Services

The examples provided in the District Developed Service Delivery Plan document for “Continuum of Services” are applicable for preschool children by substituting “Regular Early Childhood Program” for “general education” and “Early Childhood Special Education Program” for “special class.”

The following additional example describes instructional service provided in a regular early childhood program in which the general education teacher is appropriately licensed to teach preschool children receiving special education services.

Regular Early Childhood Program with Teacher holding Dual Endorsements (i.e. Ed 100). The child is served in the regular early childhood classroom with a teacher who holds a valid practitioner's license issued by the Board of Educational Examiners that includes prekindergarten and early childhood special education. The teacher is responsible for direct instruction, preparation of materials, adaptations and accommodations as specified in the IEP. The teacher with the dual endorsement is responsible for implementing and monitoring the child’s progress according to the IEP.

General and Special Education Teachers for Preschool Children

General Education: The regular early childhood program is taught by a general education teacher who holds a valid practitioner's license and holds an endorsement that includes prekindergarten.

Endorsements for Early Childhood Education are:

100 Teacher – Prekindergarten through grade three, including special education;

103 Teacher – Prekindergarten through kindergarten; and

106 Teacher – Prekindergarten through grade three.

ECSE: The early childhood special education program, as well as the consultation and support in the regular early childhood program, must be provided by an ECSE teacher who holds a valid practitioner’s license and holds an endorsement that includes ECSE. The ECSE teacher is responsible for monitoring the child’s progress on IEP goals.

Endorsements for Early Childhood Special Education are:

100 Teacher – Prekindergarten through grade three, including special education;

223 Teacher – Prekndg through kindergarten, early childhood spec. ed.

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Providing Access to the Continuum of Services

The district will provide access to this continuum for all eligible individuals based on their IEP. Services may be provided within the district, or through contractual agreement with other districts and/or agencies (i.e. early childhood programs in community).

Districts that are providing instructional services through a contractual agreement with other districts and/or other agencies will need to examine the preschool services annually to determine the availability of regular early childhood programs within the district.

Preschool Program Standards Requirement

Early childhood special education and regular early childhood programs providing instructional services to children on an IEP must implement Preschool Program Standards as defined by the Iowa Department of Education. In the District Developed Service Delivery Plan, a district must address how instructional services are provided in placements that meet Preschool Program Standards.

Preschool Program Standards

The DE has defined the Preschool Program Standards as the following:

- 1.) Iowa Quality Preschool Program Standards (QPPS);
 - 2.) Head Start Program Performance Standards; or
 - 3.) National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) Accreditation.
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Addressing Question #3

Question #3 addresses teacher caseloads.

The question asks: *How will caseloads of special education teachers be determined and regularly monitored?*

The full continuum of placements providing instructional services to eligible preschool children must implement one of the three Preschool Program Standards as defined by the Iowa Department of Education. Therefore, when addressing Question 3; a district's regular early childhood program and early childhood special education programs must meet the criteria of the Preschool Program Standard being implemented regarding maximum class size and teacher-child ratios.
